

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FOR: CU/WE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SEDU, IT

SUBJ: POSSIBLE USG SUPPORT, AMERICAN ACADEMY

REF: STRAUS/ARNDT TELCON

1. THIS RESPONSE UNCOORDINATED WITH ACADEMY OFFICIALS, BUT BASED ON LONG OBSERVATION OF ACADEMY, DISCUSSIONS AND CRITICAL EXAMINATIONS.

2. ASSISTANCE TO AMERICAN ACADEMY, WHICH WE WOULD FAVOR, SHOULD BE EXAMINED CAREFULLY IN TERMS OF ACADEMY'S STATED NEEDS. BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE PRESENT OR POTENTIAL RELATIONSHIP TO USG EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INTERESTS IN ITALY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME. ACADEMY'S APPROACH TO USG ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN TO USE ITS REAL ESTATE TO GENERATE FUNDS TO BUILD UP ITS ENDOWMENT, PRESUMABLY THROUGH USG PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AND LOAN OF LAND BACK TO ACADEMY FOR USE. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE HISTORIC LAND AND BUILDINGS, ONE OF WHICH IS A MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENT BY MCKIM, MEAD AND WHITE, BE BROUGHT UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE, AND MAINTAINED AS A NATIONAL PARK. CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING FOR EITHER PURCHASE OR MAINTENANCE AS

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NATIONAL PARK WOULD BE REQUIRED. IF PURCHASE, THE COST WOULD BE IN VICINITY OF SIX TO EIGHT MILLION DOLLARS. EITHER OF TWO ALTERNATIVES WOULD REFLECT ACADEMY'S APPROACH.

3. ANOTHER FORM OF USG ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE THROUGH AID LEGISLATION FOR ASSISTANCE TO AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS ABROAD. WHILE THE ACADEMY AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED DOES NOT FIT CURRENT CATEGORIES

OF THIS LEGISLATION, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A NEW ROLE COULD BE FOUND FOR IT WHICH WOULD SATISFY ALL. NOTE THAT THIS WOULD BE AN ANNUAL GRANT AND PROVIDE NO LONG-TERM SECURITY EXCEPT AS VOTED BY CONGRESS.

4. MISSION'S LONG OBSERVATION OF ACADEMY HOWEVER HAS RAISED DEEP CONCERNS ABOUT ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OVERALL US EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EFFORTS HERE. THEREFORE WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE NEW KIND OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMY AND USG WHICH WOULD BE IN INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES AND PERHAPS EVEN HELP ACADEMY REVITALIZE ITSELF. WHILE EXPLANATION OF THIS NOTION REQUIRES MORE SPACE THAN WE HAVE, IT MAY SUFFICE TO SAY THAT THE ACADEMY'S EARLY MISSION OF BUILDING A MORE BEAUTIFUL AMERICA HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN BY THE YEARS AND BY THE VAST GROWTH OF VARIOUS USG AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS (FULBRIGHT, FOR ONE EXAMPLE). VARIOUS OFFICIALS OF THE ACADEMY HAS BEEN CONCERNED WITH THIS ANACHRONISTIC DILEMMA AND WITH DEFINING A NEW ROLE, BUT BOARD ALUMNI RESISTANCE ETC. SEEMS TO HAVE IMPEDED THE BASIC REASSESSMENT WE BELIEVE IS NEEDED.

5. WE ARE MAINLY CONCERNED AT THE ACADEMY'S LACK OF CONTACT WITH PRESENT-DAY ITALY. ITS FELLOWS TEND TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES ON THEIR HILLTOP, IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENCLAVE. ALL EFFORTS TO ATTRACT A WIDE REANGE OF ITALIANS TO ACADEMY EVENTS HAVE FAILED. WE COULD IMAGINE AN INSTITUTION IN WHICH HALF OF THE RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS WERE ITALIAN, WHERE EVERY AMERICAN HAD A COUNTERPART. BUT WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS WOULD PROFOUNDLY ALTER THE NATURE OF THE INSTITUTION.

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6. ONE IDEA WHICH HAS BEEN SUGGESTED, WHICH WE BELIEVE WOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH AID FUNDING, WOULD BE TO TURN PART OF THE ACADEMY INTO A CENTER FOR AMERICAN STUDIES RESOURCES. AT PRESENT THERE IS LITTLE REASON FOR ITALIANS TO USE ACADEMY RESOURCES EXCEPT FOR ITS FINE LIBRARY ON CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY. AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE U.S. IN THE COMPANY OF YOUNG AMERICANS WHO WERE STUDYING ASPECTS OF ITALY STRIKES US AS A RICH POSSIBILITY.

7. ANOTHER SUGGESTION WOULD BE FOR THE ACADEMY TO BECOME A GRADUATE TEACHING INSTITUTION, LINKED TO A CONSORTIUM OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES, AND PROVIDING A CENTER AND SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN RESEARCH IN ITALY IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES.

8. AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION IN ITALY WHICH THE ACADEMY MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED TO ACCEPT: COORDINATOR OF ALL AMERICAN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS IN ITALY, A JOB WHICH THE CAO OFFICE IS NOT EQUIPPED TO PERFORM AND WHICH NEEDS SERIOUS ATTENTION. USING AS A MODEL

THE ACADEMY'S DYNAMIC ROLE IN COORDINATING ASSISTANCE TO RESCUE ART WORKS IN FRIULI AFTER THE EARTHQUAKES, THE ACADEMY COULD PLAY A VITAL ROLE. RESEARCH NEEDS TO BE COORDINATED, SCHOLARS NEED TO BE SUPPORTED, MUSEUM LEANS NEED TO BE SHEPHERDED, UNIVERSITY OVERSEAS PROGRAMS NEED TO BE EVALUATED AND ACCREDITED, IN SHORT THE ENTIRE US ACADEMIC EFFORT IN ITALY NEEDS A HEAD, AND ALSO A PROTAGONIST TO DEAL WITH AN INCREASINGLY RESTIVE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. LACKING THE UMBRELLA OF A US CULTURAL TREATY, MANY AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS FIND THEMSELVES ON SHAKY GROUND WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR EXISTENCE HERE.

9. THESE ARE ONLY SOME THOUGHTS WHICH COME TO OUR MIND (WE REMIND: EMPHATICALLY NOT RPT NOT TO THE ACADEMY'S MIND). TO MAKE THESE MINDS MEET, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT A FALL CONFERENCE BE CONVENED, BY THE ACADEMY. THE CONFERENCE WOULD GROUP CURRENT LEADERSHIP WITH A LARGE AND WIDE VARIETY OF OUTSIDER INSIDERS LIKE MYRON GILMORE OF HARVARD, FORMER DIRECTOR OF I TATTI IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FLORENCE, JOHN MCANDREW, DIRECTOR OF SAVE VENICE, ETC. WHO COULD PERSUADE ACADEMY LOYALISTS AND TRADITIONALISTS THAT THERE ARE OTHER NEEDS TODAY. AT THIS MEETING, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE USG SEND OBSERVERS, PERHAPS REPRESENTING THE MISSION, CU, USIA, THE PARK SERVICE, HEW, THE ENDOWMENTS, THE SMITHSONIAN, AND PERHAPS THE CONGRESS. THE POINT: TO GET THE ACADEMY TO THINK ABOUT ALTERNATE ROLES, AND TO EXPRESS USG WILLINGNESS TO HELP IF APPROPRIATE.

10. IN SUM, THERE IS A STRONG ARGUMENT TO BE MADE THAT THE ACADEMY AS IS IS INDEED A MORIBUND ANACHRONISM. PERHAPS THE TIME FOR CHANGE HAS COME, WITH NEW MANAGEMENT IN NEW YORK AND ROME; BUT WE HAVE WATCHED A DYNAMIC AND FAR-SEEING DIRECTOR TRY TO CHANGE THE ACADEMY OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS. THERE IS MORE INVOLVED THAN MERE LEADERSHIP. WE WOULD FAVOR USG SUPPORT FOR THE ACADEMY, BUT ONLY IN A PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIP WHERE THE ACADEMY CAN BE ENCOURAGED TO RISE TO THE NEW NEEDS OF US-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIPS IN EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS FOR TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S GENERATIONS. GARDNER

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